

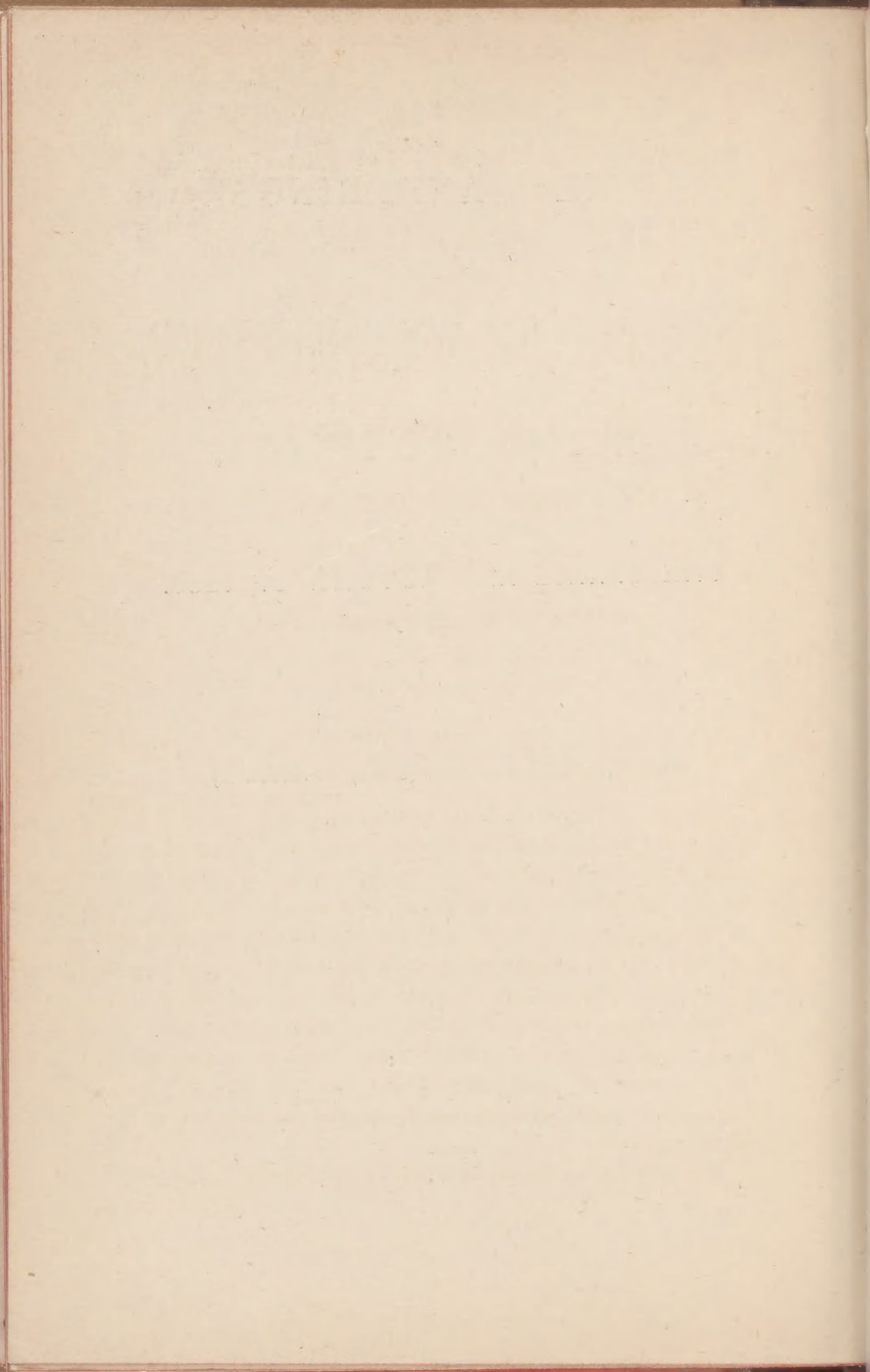
No. 7

THE WANDERINGS
OF THE
HERMIT OF WESTMINSTER,
ON THE CONTINENT,
IN
THE SPRING AND AUTUMN OF 1880.

BY
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SPRING'S SUMMONS.

"Wake, O wake! for now at last,
Cruel Winter's reign is past."

—SONGS OF KILLARNEY.

"When rising Spring adorns the mead,
A charming scene of Nature is displayed."

—DRYDEN.

ON the occasion of the sudden and quite unexpected disruption of the Governmental machinery of the country, by the dissolution of the House of Commons in the spring of the year, the Hermit took the opportunity which it afforded him, of turning his back on the work of preparing to defend or oppose, as the case might be, such of the private Bills of the Session as he was then engaged upon; and, bidding good bye to his native land for about a month, went to look after affairs on the Continent, hoping to return with recruited energies to his work at Westminster.

And now, at his leisure in a quiet corner of the Austrian

dominions, he takes up his pen to jot down some of his impressions concerning the first of his two holiday tours of the year of grace 1880.

Arriving in the gay City of Paris on the 22nd of March, he rested for one night at his favourite hostelry, the "Hotel de deux Mondes," in the Avenue de l'Opera, and next day started for Turin, where he again renewed his agreeable acquaintance with the "Grand Hotel de Turin," feeling rather fatigued with the long journey from Paris, occupying 22 hours; but a day's quiet sojourn in the pleasant old city, and a night in bed, fitted him for the start which he made the next morning for Venice, where he duly arrived in the evening.

Here all was new and novel to him, this being his first introduction to Venice, the numerous narrow canals, the Grand Canal, and its historic gondolas. But the Hermit, with that intuitive perception of the fitness of things, which so well becomes all "bona-fide travellers," and especially Hermits, accepted with easy grace, and gratefully, the polite attentions of those courtiers and other well-trained officials, whose presumed warm regard for the credit of their country forbids their declining to accept, in return for their services, some specimens of the national circulating medium, when offered to them, in the shape of Italian Government Bank Notes for five pence or ten pence as the case might be;—fancy Bank of England Notes for five pence, and *unredeemable* too!

The services here referred to and accepted, consisted in conveying the Hermit's modest quantity of luggage from the terminal station of the railway, on the very brink of the Grand Canal, to the gondola in which he was to be conveyed to his hotel.

And to this luxurious aquatic conveyance he was politely conducted. Stepping into it as one might who was "to the manner born," he was conveyed across the

Grand into and along and through several minor canals, and, finally, into the Grand Canal again, and alongside the steps in front of the "Grand Hotel."

"Did'st ever see a Gondola? For fear
 You should not, I'll describe it you exactly;
 'Tis a long covered boat that's common here,
 Carved at the prow, built lightly, but compactly,
 Rowed by two rowers, each called "Gondolier,"
 It glides along the water looking blackly,
 Just like a coffin clapt in a canoe,
 Where none can make out what you say or do."

—BYRON.

The time of arrival was about seven o'clock in the evening, and with the exception of the light given by the moon, which was not very bright, and by the artificial lights exhibited here and there on and in buildings and on the prows of vessels, it was dark. This, however, did not detract from, but rather added to, the novelty of the situation; glimmering lights flitting silently about the narrow and gloomy watery highways, walled in on each side by grim and prison-like looking buildings, but—

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
 Nor iron barres a cage;
 Mindes innocent, and quiet, take
 That for an hermitage."

—COLONEL LOVELACE.

The only noise by which the silence was disturbed was caused by the gondoliers, who, to avoid collisions, call to one another on approaching the corners or intersections of these narrow canals.

Nothing but actual experience can give an adequate conception of the ideas engendered under the circumstances. One's mind going backward irresistibly to the olden time, when the historic "Council of Ten" ruled in all their might and mystery, and by secret decrees doomed innocent and guilty alike to torture, or to death—in dungeons, down below the level of the water in the canals,

existing then as now, on which the free-born Englishman of to-day ventures without fear of Inquisitors, or any other of "the powers of darkness."

Again does this strong sense of the mighty difference between the past and the present strike the mind of a stranger, when he is received by the polite landlord and his attendants, and is ushered up to his room in a hotel replete with all modern luxuries. He passes up a handsome staircase, through comfortable passages and corridors, with stained glass windows here and there, and articles of luxury on all sides, exhibiting a due regard for the fine arts, in every way befitting a life of ease, comfort, and refinement.

Well, having been thus politely installed in a comfortable room, which, for the time you may want it, you feel is your own, the first *practical* idea—and after all the poetry and sentimental part of the business is over, *practical* ideas are indispensable everywhere and on all occasions, and so here—the first practical idea was for a good wash, and the next, a good dinner. Both these essentials followed in due course, and, with a sense of gratitude for favours received, and full of anticipation of pleasures to come, the Hermit retired to his couch for the night.

After a good night's rest, the first craving experienced in the morning, was, for a sight by broad daylight of the far-famed Grand Canal, and this craving was very soon gratified. The view reminded the Hermit of the enthusiastic Frenchman, who is reported to have exclaimed, a long time since, before Paris was half so fine a city as it is at the present day, "see Paris and die." Well, the Hermit does not quite understand or agree with this kind of French philosophy; he thinks it would be preferable to say, see Paris and *live*; and he would add by way of advice, see Venice afterwards; and remember, there is only one Venice,—nobody, not even Mr. Barnum, the American showman, has ever thought of making so much as a copy of it for exhibition.

St. Mark's, that choice portion of Venice about which art critics have raved, and gone into fits of admiration and veneration, and indulged in learned disputations about its lines of beauty and its "stones," will never be reproduced in its original integrity; so everybody who can, and whose soul is alive to beauty in architecture, and the lovely harmony of true proportion, should go and see St. Mark's as it now exists, as the Hermit did, by daylight and moonlight; and then read Ruskin's "Stones of Venice," and Mr. Street's enthusiastic letters about the vandalism and positive sin of putting new marble in the place of old, and omitting to make the new exactly like the old, as it now appears on the outside of St. Mark's after the lapse of ages, in those mellow tints which time alone can give; to say nothing about the dilapidated floor of the church, the defects of which one is led to infer are positive beauties in his artistic eyes.

The Hermit having observed in the columns of the London papers the signs of a "Tempest in a tea cup" at Oxford, occasioned by the report of an Italian Governmental resolution to continue the work of repairing the west front of this ancient cathedral, which work of reparation was commenced some time since, he carefully took stock, or special notice, of its state and condition, and, undismayed by the thunder and lightning reverberating and flashing in the columns of "The Times," he came to the conclusion that the art critics of Oxford and London were agitated to an extent which the facts did not fully justify.

He argued with himself thus, while musing on the spot, seated as he was on a stone bench in front of the grand old pile;—anything that is good is worthy of preservation, and any structure which displays in its design evidences of a commanding genius, should be cherished and maintained with jealous care, especially when it represents the state of art at a remote period; and if this grand old work does

not very soon receive extensive repairs, some of it will fall without the intervention of human hands—some of it indeed has fallen. A life-size statue, for instance, some time since left its old anchorage on the apex of a gable of the west front, and was smashed to atoms on the pavement below—the anchor or iron bar which till then had sustained it in its place remains attached to the pinnacle, sticking up in the air to this day, as a signal of distress. In many parts similar effects are imminent, and only prevented from happening by being temporarily propped up.

The marble slabs with which the front is in great part veneered, are, in fact, less than three-quarters of an inch thick, and many of these have become loose and detached from the face of the brick or rubble wall, to which they were originally secured by cement and by metallic holdfasts; these plates require removal and replacement, and the columns—many being out of the perpendicular, and some broken—also require renewal and refixing.

These are the simple facts, and if the existing dilapidations are not promptly attended to by efficient restoration, the grand old work will inevitably go to decay, and cease to be “a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.”

Having more than once thus meditated in the Grand Square of St. Mark's, and wandered about the curious old city—once upon a time an important emporium of commerce—observing its extraordinary and unique characteristics, the Hermit felt thankful for having had an opportunity of seeing the place and its people, and with a feeling of regret he watched for a few minutes the builders at work driving piles for the foundation of a new structure, in the place of an old one which had, with some others contiguous to it, been removed to make way for *public improvements*, for he could not help feeling that it savoured of desecration to modernize old Venice; it ought, as a whole,

St. Mark's included, in his opinion to be repaired, renovated, and maintained in its original character while time lasts—if that indeed be possible; and with these conservative feelings he bade adieu to this fallen city, with its romantic history, and went on his way to Florence, en route for Rome.

As to lovely Florence, as he has said something in other notes about a previous visit to it, he will say no more now than that it is one of those places by which pleasurable feelings are always excited when the recollection of its beauties crops up, whether of the Painter's or the Sculptor's Art, its architectural marvels, or its unaided natural charms; and his short stay in it on this occasion having refreshed and deepened his affection for it, he proceeded on his journey to Rome.

His feelings and anticipations, as the train in which he travelled from Florence drew near the "Eternal City," may be imagined by those who have experienced the pleasurable sensations engendered by the proximate realization of ardent hopes long deferred, but they scarcely admit of accurate description. He tried to look out of both sides of the carriage at one and the same time, but failed; however, as he went along, he first observed the visible signs of former greatness and power in the majestic remains of the Aqueduct of Claudius, which, in bygone ages, served to convey to the Romans an abundant supply of water, pure and fresh from the mountains—the length of this stupendous work being about sixty miles.

Having had a view of this before arriving at the city as the train sped onwards, the Hermit caught a glimpse of the ancient ruin called the Temple of Minerva Medica, as he entered Rome by the central Railway Station on the Esquiline Hill, through an opening in the wall of the fortification built by Aurelius.

His first impression on leaving the station was one of

surprise at the newness of the structures all around; grand modern stone buildings, of magnificent character and familiar type, massive and solid enough, but by no means venerable, line the way on all sides to the "Grand Hotel Quirinal," and beyond it, in the Via Nazionale; having taken up his temporary abode here, he had a brush-up, and availed himself of the hour or so there was to spare before the table d'hôte dinner would be ready, and strolled forth to find something belonging to *old* Rome, and soon discovered the Tower on the top of which Nero fiddled while Rome was burning.

This was enough before dinner, he could enjoy his evening meal now he had seen a monument which connected the present with the past; he moralized a bit about the fiddling, and wondered how long the fiddler would be permitted in the present day, to exhibit his taste for music in such a situation, and under such circumstances; things are not quite perfect in England yet, but we may be thankful we have no Roman Neros to trouble us.

Next morning the first object of attraction was St. Peter's; and the drive there through the streets of old Rome was a matter of intense interest—quite indescribable, food for thought appeared at every turn concerning the historic past and the present. Surprise was not so much the sensation, as satisfaction that at last the desire of the Hermit's heart had been gratified by a sight of the famous city which at one time ruled the world.

The first view of St. Peter's was disappointing, the vast dome is to a great extent hidden by the nave having been lengthened, the façade was brought forward far beyond the original design of Michael Angelo, and his ground plan was altered from a Greek to a Latin cross for the sake of covering the whole of the site of the former edifice, which it replaced. No adequate conception of its grandeur can be formed until it is seen from the interior.

Nevertheless, the Hermit was deeply impressed with the vastness and nobility of the genius of the original conception, and the work as it stands, with its colonnade formed by four rows of 568 columns, each being $42\frac{1}{2}$ feet in height, and its splendid fountains and obelisk in the centre.

Having feasted his eyes and got a tolerably clear idea of the external beauties of St. Peter's, he entered the Church, and took a quiet survey of its interior, and there he found much to admire in beauty of design and skill in execution ; and then he wandered into the Vatican, the Sistine Chapel, the Library, and the Museum—all containing priceless treasures and gems of art, science, and literature ; creating in the mind of the visitor a desire to go again and again, when time and opportunity may serve, so as to renew and form a more intimate acquaintance with works of such undying interest.

The next objects of attention were the bridge and castle of St. Angelo ; the castle being originally a tomb, or magnificent mausoleum, for Hadrian, which, so far back as the time of Honorius, was transformed into a fortress.

It is said to have been encased, or faced with massive blocks of pure Parian marble ; evidences of some kind of facing remain, and were scrutinised by the Hermit, but the blocks of Parian are gone. The summit was crowned by a colossal marble statue of the founder (Hadrian), the head of which may be seen in the rotunda of the Vatican museum.

He explored this stupendous monument from the basement to the summit, and from the top of it looked down and around upon the panorama below ; the Tiber, which flows on as of old, the bridge connecting the old city with the castle, and the living human stream which now knows something of the liberty which was denied the citizens in times when tyrants ruled as they chose ; when offenders against orthodoxy were treated to a turn or two of the

thumb-screw, or some other ingenious instrument of torture, and confined in dark dungeons, into which food was supplied to them through holes in the brick or stone domes which formed the covering of each cell.

But it sometimes happened that the jailors poured down these small openings boiling oil, which fell upon the unfortunate prisoners who came forward expecting to receive from above their rations of food, and thus they were tortured into confession or to death.

The arrangements for affording facilities for this kind of cruelty are shown and explained to visitors by the guide, who also directs attention to the ancient implements of torture, which adorn! the walls of an upper room of the castle, and which were in common use in the "good old times," when the right of private judgment was too great a luxury to be permitted to influence the actions of ordinary mortals, and "Board schools" had not come into existence as they have in our time in "the land we live in."

The bridge is remarkable for its strength and solidity, and is a picturesque structure; many other bridges built across the Tiber within the last 1700 years—which is about the age of this—have been swept away by inundations, but this has stood and remains firm and perfect as ever at the end of seventeen centuries,

Then followed a visit to the ruins of the Colosseum, or Flavian amphitheatre, so called from the three Emperors of the Flavian family—Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian. This vast structure, capable of affording accommodation to 87,000 spectators, was founded by Vespasian about the year 72, on the site of the ornamental lake in Nero's garden; it was dedicated by Titus, in the year 80, with games which lasted 100 days, during which 9,000 wild animals were slain in the arena, and was completed by Domitian; thirty thousand Jewish prisoners of war, it is said, were employed in building it; it is now a magnificent ruin, numerous

palaces and a host of minor buildings having been built of the stones removed from it as from a great stone quarry.

Gladiatorial combats, the martyrdom of Christians, and exhibitions of men fighting with animals, were powerful attractions to the multitude of spectators in the days before a great earthquake rent its walls; and in those luxurious times it was not uncommon, as Mark Twain would say, to feed wild beasts on Christians.

The Arch of Titus, the Forum, the Arch of Constantine, the Temple of Vesta, the Golden House of Nero, and the Baths of Caracalla, or the remains of them, were all scrutinised in turn, and were each and all the subjects of reflection and deep interest. And then the Hermit visited the most wonderful church of all, so far as the interior is concerned, that of St. Paul—plain without, but grand in its conception and execution, so far at least as it has been carried out, surpassing in magnificence and beauty all he had seen; and to all who are in anywise curious respecting architectural marvels, he would simply say—go and see this, if you desire to have your conceptions of the grand and sumptuous enlarged.

And then he entered upon the “Appian Way,” the name of which is “familiar in our mouths as household words.” Who can have read of it and its scenes and history, and not be fired with a desire to travel upon it, and muse on the old road, lined as it is with the ruins of massive and magnificent tombs—evidences of former greatness, which are in themselves so many proofs of the truth of history as recorded in inspired and other pages—silent, but deeply impressive records of eventful times, and human progress through a period exceeding eighteen centuries.

While traversing this ancient highway, the Hermit came to the church of Santa Maria della Pianta, within which is the entrance to the Catacombs. These subterranean vaults constitute a vast network of labyrinthine galleries

extending for many miles underground ; the one he entered is called the Catacomb of St. Callixtus ; then come the Jewish Catacomb and the Catacomb of St. Sebastian ; and, then in the Via Appia again, the tomb of Romulus, the son of Maxentius, and the extensive ruins of the Circus of Romulus. All these the Hermit passed in review ; and, to satisfy the cravings of nature, pulled up at a wine shop, or road-side Inn, on one side of the Latin way, into which he went by a cross road, for refreshment, which was served up in very primitive style ; and this he felt grateful for, the meal consisting of eggs and bread and wine, accompanied by the finest of all known sauces, namely, *hunger* ; and finally found his way back to his hotel in modern Rome in good time for dinner.

Next morning he drove to the Quirinal Palace, the State rooms of which he strolled through, refreshing thereby his recollections of some of the doings of Napoleon the First, who made within its walls a prisoner of Pius the Seventh, and which is now the Royal Palace of the King of Italy.

Having seen all these objects of interest, and many more, and pondered over the tangible evidences of the vast changes which have taken place in old Rome through a period exceeding 2,000 years, the Hermit set out for Naples, where he arrived in due course, and found another temporary home at the "Hotel Tramontano," which is situated sufficiently high up the hill side, at the head of the delightful Bay, to be beyond the reach of the pestiferous nuisances which exist in the immediate neighbourhood of the hotels down below,—nuisances of which the mere description is apt to affect the imagination to such an extent as to engender bodily disease, therefore the unsavoury details are mercifully omitted from these pages.

The first desire of the Hermit on arriving at this hotel, at eleven o'clock at night, was to get a sight of Vesuvius, and he was delighted to find that he could see it from his

bedroom window ; and from thence he witnessed for the first time the outpouring of its smoke or vapour, rising like a column and spreading like a cloud, trending away for many miles ; and having seen this wonder of the world, he retired to rest.

Next morning he chartered a one-horse vehicle, and set out after breakfast for an exploring drive, and found the situation to be one of matchless beauty—the City occupying the base, the slopes, and terraces of a vast hill, in the form of an amphitheatre, the length or width being about four miles, with the delicious bay of blue sea in front ; “ a City set upon a hill,” of which it may fairly be said, in the words of Bishop Heber, that—

“ All the prospect pleases,
And only man is vile.”

and certainly the reflection is forced upon a visitor that there is here a strange mixture of the beautiful, the repulsive, and the miserable. Nature has been lavish with her charms, and endowed Naples with wonderful attractions ; but it cannot be said that the inhabitants give one the idea of a happy family, or a high-class community. They have not had the educational advantages of good training, nor of the blessings resulting from wise government ; ignorance and superstition have stood for ages, and still stand, in the way, and render it difficult for the Government of to-day to establish wise laws and good order among the citizens.

As for beggars, and thieves, and lazy drones, and repulsive specimens of humanity, they abound to such an extent as, perhaps, is unknown elsewhere among the Cities of Europe.

But it would be doing the Neapolitans an injustice to apply this character to them indiscriminately ; there are among the lower classes hard-working, industrious, and cheerful people, enjoying life in a climate which renders

clothing almost needless, so that a scanty covering of rags suffices for those whose tastes are not æsthetic; and as the means of sustenance are easily obtainable, there is not much need for hard labour.

Much has been done for Naples since the accomplishment of the unification of Italy; and the present Government is entitled to credit for the improvements effected in the correction of sanitary deficiencies; but much more remains to be done in the way of water supply and drainage, before it can be considered a safe place of residence for visitors, even for a short stay in the City.

Progress in sanitary matters is not rapid in Italy; the introduction of a Systematic Water Supply to Naples has been under consideration for the last twenty years, and has not yet been decided upon, although all that is wanted is the means of conducting an ample quantity of the element, from the mountains in the background, into the City. Possibly for another decade or more, the provision of this first necessity of civilized life may be delayed, and the inhabitants kept, as they are now, dependent upon water carriers, who convey it to them in small wooden casks.

Well, having visited the Museum and some other objects and places of interest in the City, the Hermit started one fine morning on board a steamer for a trip up the beautiful Bay, on an excursion to Capri, with the intention of seeing its famous Blue Grotto; however, on arriving off the Island, the sea was considered by the Guides to be too rough for the venture, and so the passengers had to be content with a walk on the shore and a lunch at an hotel on the mountain side.

The visit to the Island being concluded, all returned on board, and the vessel was headed towards Naples again, calling at Sorrento; and here the greater number of passengers left the ship, and were conveyed in boats to land.

The Hermit took this course, and found comfortable

accommodation at the "Hotel Syrene." This hotel is built on the edge of the cliff, which rises from the sea level to some two hundred feet or thereabouts; and from the seaward windows the view is magnificent, with Amalfi, the beautiful, on the opposite side of the vast Bay, and Vesuvius, the terrible, on the right hand of the observer.

A drive of some two hours or so before dinner was simply a delicious treat. Orange and lemon groves by the road side, the trees laden with fruit, the way winding, hilly, and picturesque, affording occasional peeps into or across the Bay, which lay some 200 or 300 feet down below, presented combinations of loveliness, producing sensations bordering on enchantment.

An enjoyable dinner in the evening, and a good night's rest in a bedroom commanding a view of Vesuvius, which, as it happened that night, sent forth a column of fire, fitted our wanderer for pursuing his way to Pompeii on the following day, delighted with his visit to Sorrento.

The drive to Pompeii was one of extraordinary beauty for about two thirds of the way, that is to say, from Sorrento to Castellamaré, the ground rising in the course of the drive to some 500 feet above the sea level; and then followed sensations of a new order.

It seemed strange to the Hermit that the principal entrance to Pompeii should be, as in fact it is, through a public-house, dignified by the name of the "Hotel Diomedé." This rather jarred with his notion of the fitness of things; however, he dismissed his coachman and his one-horse shandrydan, and made his way through one or two rooms of the hotel and up a staircase, and finally through a primitive kind of doorway, and found himself within the precincts of the "City of the dead."

And about the streets of this disinterred city he wandered alone, guide book and map in hand, finding his way by these aids to all the principal points of interest—the Forum,

the Amphitheatre, the House of Castor and Pollux, the Baths, &c., &c.—the scenes rendering the written accounts he had read of in history, strikingly clear to his perceptions; the contents of the little museum, near the Water Gate, adding greatly to the completeness of the evidences appearing in profusion on all sides; illustrating the awful character of the eruption of the volcano by which the entire city was overwhelmed and remained buried for nearly two thousand years.

Having thus wandered and mused through these silent streets of Pompeii, with their old, time-worn stone or lava pavements, existing now, just as they were when suddenly covered with that deep funeral pall of volcanic ashes and scorixæ, which blotted the city out of the living and visible world for many centuries, the Hermit engaged a one-horse vehicle, and was driven by an Italian “cabby” to the railway station of Annunziata, where he took a train for Naples.

Then followed a night and another half-day at Naples, and the journey back to Rome, and then two more days in the grand old city, which has long been the veritable happy hunting ground of classical students, rich beyond measure in traditions and memories of Apostolic times, and calling forcibly to mind the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, who were the objects of the Apostle’s solicitude, and to whom he wrote—“So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also,” teaching lessons hard to learn, but when learnt, becoming “the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth.”

These two days having been spent in wanderings and musing about old Rome, the Hermit reluctantly bade adieu to the enchantments and allurements of this City of Cities and set out for Pisa, on his way homewards, to renew his acquaintance with its leaning tower, which on a former occasion he had seen, but not ascended.

He arrived at night and found comfortable accommodation

at the "Hotel Minerva," which is conveniently situated near the railway station, and after a good breakfast he visited the Tower, ascended it and walked round the top of it, which is guarded by a light iron railing. His object was to examine the structure more critically than he had before done, and to satisfy himself entirely, if possible, as to the debated question—whether it was designed and built as it now stands, some fourteen feet or so out of the perpendicular, or whether its inclination is simply due to a settlement of its foundation—and having gone up and down its smooth and slippery marble steps, which are built in between the outer and inner walls, he fully satisfied himself, that, to attribute its inclination to design and genius is a popular fallacy.

Having made this examination, he took a train for Turin, *viâ* Genoa and Milan, arriving at his destination at 11.10 p.m., putting up for the night at his favourite hotel near the railway station. Having passed through some beautiful scenery after leaving the station at Spezia, noticing particularly en route charming villas in arcadian grounds, a fine bell tower afflicted with the same complaint from which the Tower of Pisa has been suffering for the last five hundred years or so, and also some choicely-placed chateaux on terraced mountain sides, with an abundance of olive, cypress, and fig trees, and vines, adorning the lovely landscape between Spezia and Genoa.

The journey from Genoa through Milan to Turin was performed after sunset, for by far the greater part of the way, therefore the Hermit has nothing to say about it beyond this, that he enjoyed a nap, which went to the credit of his night's rest.

From Turin he started next morning at 9.40 for "Aix les Bains," arriving in time for dinner on Saturday evening, and enjoyed a quiet Sunday in this very nice town, which has a reputation for gaming and gambling, but

of which vices the Hermit saw nothing, possibly because the season had not commenced. Anyhow, he found it an agreeable place of rest, with charming scenery around it, and on the following morning he set out by an early train for Paris, where he duly arrived after a delay of two hours or so at Macon, at about eleven o'clock at night, and enjoyed a good night's rest at his hotel in the Avenue de l'Opera.

Two days' wandering about this gay city completed the Hermit's holiday, and the next day found him among his genial friends in the good old City of Westminster, at the Palace Hotel, ready to resume his labours and join in the pleasures of social life.

AUTUMN.

“Yellow Autumn, wreathed with nodding corn.”

—BURNS’ BRIGS OF AYR.

“Crowned with the sickle and the wheaten sheaf,
While Autumn, nodding o’er the yellow plain,
Comes jovial on, the Doric reed once more,
Well pleased I tune.”

—THOMSON.

FOUR months having passed away since the Hermit’s return from his last holiday trip through sunny Italy, and the work of the Parliamentary Session being practically over, although not quite concluded, the Hermit resolved to leave the Marquis of Hartington to fight it out with Home Rulers and other fractious schismatics, and to start again on his travels in search of “fresh woods and pastures new.”

Thus inspired, he entered a train at Victoria Station, at 7.40 on the morning of the 21st of August, for Brussels, viâ Dover and Calais; arriving there conveniently in time for dinner at the “Hotel Belle Vue.” A quiet Sunday followed, and the next day was devoted to a visit, by the familiar stage coach, to the battle field of Waterloo; a pilgrimage made by myriads to a gory shrine in memory of the dauntless valour and indomitable pluck of British soldiers, who won the battle which resulted in making Napoleon a prisoner, and Wellington a hero.

The long-existing peace which followed this terrible conflict was rudely disturbed just when the innocents of Europe, who had been “heaping up riches, not knowing who shall gather them,” had got it into their heads that the time had come, or was very near indeed, when swords

would be "beaten into plough-shares and spears into pruning-hooks," and when the great seal was set to this pleasant programme in a palace of glass, which was designed for the occasion at the instance of Prince Albert, by the late Duke of Devonshire's head gardener—Sir Joseph Paxton—and set up in Hyde Park in 1851.

But, alas! since then, thrones have been shaken and kingdoms violently disturbed, the map of Europe re-cast, and many head gardeners deprived of their occupation. The "balance of power," which leading statesmen tried hard to maintain, gave way to disruptive forces, and has not yet been satisfactorily re-adjusted; and thus we are again made painfully conscious of the truism, that "too many cooks spoil the broth."

In this state of things, quiet observers, like the gentle Hermit of Westminster, have looked on with deep interest at the struggles, still going on in the political world, between French and Austrian, Italian and German, Russian and Turkish Plaintiffs and Defendants; concerned above all things that, whoever may lose, old England shall win; not by taking anything belonging to any other people, but by maintaining and practising, as a fundamental rule of action among the nations, principles of inflexible truth and justice, and so win and maintain a reputation, the value of which shall be "above rubies."

In looking backward through the period of the great events which have transpired in the last thirty years, the Hermit arrived at the conclusion that Caesarism in France has been a curse to the modern world; and that the huge armies of Europe are sapping the vital energies of the nations, which have been driven, or have chosen, to maintain under arms, vast multitudes of men who have been taken from industrial pursuits and trained to the art of war.

And with these impressions on his mind he wandered about the Continent, visiting its principal cities, keeping

an observant eye on the habits and customs of people, and the state of leading industries in the countries through which he passed. Leaving Waterloo and its now peacefully cultivated fields, Brussels with its great Exhibition of Arts and Manufactures, and Belgium with its vast underground stores of coal and iron and its busy population, the Hermit next visited Cologne, now in the zenith of its prosperity, with its noble cathedral completed, after more than six centuries of labour and vicissitudes.

A day at this lively city of scents and social pleasures was enough, combined as it was with a visit to the Industrial Exhibition at Dusseldorf. And here the display of riches in raw materials, side by side with manufactures produced by native skill, forced upon the quiet observer the reflection, that neither the art of designing, nor skill in manufacturing, can be confined by restrictive political contrivances to any country on the face of the earth.

Surely it must be true, although the doctrine is strongly opposed, that the supreme object of "the greatest good of the greatest number" would be best provided for by genuine freedom of action concerning demand and supply, and that excellence in production would be most surely obtained by "a fair field and no favour" in the markets of the world.

Next followed a visit to the old city of Mayence, a stay of two nights at the good "Hotel de Hollande," and a flying visit to Heidelberg—with its celebrated castle and wonderful tun.

A walk about the good old Rhenish town of Mayence gives one the idea of its being a thriving commercial centre, substantial and well-to-do, after many centuries of ups and downs. It seems to have had an origin without a date; the guide book says, "In B.C. 14, Augustus sent his son-in-law Drusus to the Rhine as commander-in-chief, and to him the fortress of Mayence owes its foundation." What

had happened to the old town before that, the Hermit cannot tell, because he does not know.

But it appears that in 751 St. Boniface was confirmed there as archbishop, and that he was the son of an English wheelwright, possibly a Norfolk man—for Norfolk is famous for wheelwrights—and this old chip must have been one of the best of the craft to have a son who became an archbishop, and this son was so far from being ashamed of his father's shop, that he adopted a pair of wheels as his armorial bearings, in honour of his ancestry, and in that way he advertised his father's business; certainly, he must have been a good boy.

Heidelberg is charming in its surroundings, and when seen from the grounds of the castle on a fine day, is simply lovely—with the Neckar flowing through it down in the valley, and the luxuriantly wooded banks sloping upwards from the stream to considerable and varying heights.

The old castle commands not only the valley, but the admiration of visitors coming from afar to see this venerable relic of olden time—which is now a magnificent ruin, through the unscrupulous barbarity of Louis the 14th.

Having seen Heidelberg, and returned to Mayence for the night, the Hermit set out on the following morning for Frankfort, where he arrived after a pleasant railway journey, and drove to the "Schwan Hotel," where he was well cared for from the Saturday afternoon till the following Monday morning.

The old parts of this pleasant town cannot be called attractive; but the more modern parts of it possess very pleasing features, having good and handsome residences, erected mostly in ornamental grounds, giving a high-class character to the place, which, indeed, is regarded as being one of the most important cities of the German Empire.

Chief among the out-door attractions for an agreeable

lounge, the "Palm Garden" may be mentioned as bearing the Palm (excuse the pun), and, in this favorite place of resort, sweet music is discoursed by an excellent orchestral band of accomplished musicians, in the midst of a Germanic Eden, in which the highest floral skill has been employed with great success, in the formation of a plateau of ribbon gardening, combined with fountains and choice statuary, which struck the Hermit as being of matchless beauty.

Outside this central attraction, but within the garden, are Arcadian grounds, in which landscape gardening has been developed in pleasing style, with ornamental water, rustic bridges, and sylvan walks bordered by trees and shrubs. And in these grounds within twenty minutes' walk of the city, the citizens and visitors to Frankfort assemble in considerable numbers, for light refreshments and enjoyment in summer evenings, exhibiting a pleasant picture of social life.

After this pleasant experience came a railway journey to Munich. And here a night and part of the next day were spent, and then on to Salzburg for a short sojourn amidst scenery of the grand type. Salzburg lying in a valley with a river running through it spanned by ornamental bridges, and surrounded by mountains of varied height, with environs through which such delicious drives may be had as literally make one's heart glad.

And having seen this happy valley and enjoyed the comforts of its excellent "Hotel de l'Europe," the Hermit went on to Ischl, the journey being a very enjoyable one; the scenery being very fine after leaving the station of Gmunden, the capital of Salzkammergut, looking down from the railway, for several miles, upon the beautiful Lake of Traunsee.

Having arrived at Ischl, the Hermit drove to the "Hotel Kaiserin Elizabeth," and found all he wanted to

make life enjoyable far from home in a strange land ; and here he remained for a few days' rest from prolonged journeying and excitement.

Ischl is a favorite resort in the season for the upper crust of Viennese society, from the Emperor of Austria downwards ; there the Emperor has a chateau, and there are very great natural attractions ; but, unfortunately for the Hermit, at the time of his visit the heat was very far above the point which could be considered comfortable ; and this interfered with convenient locomotion to such an extent, as to limit his opportunities for exploring the mountain sides.

However, he spent one day in the most agreeable way imaginable, taking the train about 9 o'clock in the morning, going up the charming valley through which the river runs down into the Danube, stopping at the station at the head of the Lake Traunsee, and then embarking on board the steamer which goes up the lake to Gmunden ; and the scenery of this lake is grandly beautiful.

This trip the Hermit enjoyed immensely, and regarded it as one of the greatest pleasure excursions he had ever had, feeling that it was almost too much for one, and quite enough for two individuals ; however, he had it all to himself, being alone amongst strangers on deck, and having lunched at about two o'clock at Gmunden, he got back to dinner in the evening at Ischl.

Next day was Sunday, and for the first time in his life he had the honour of serving as the clergyman's churchwarden at morning service, and collected the alms of the small congregation, thus giving evidence that Hermits are sometimes useful.

Well, having had a quiet rest of four days at Ischl, seen trout caught in the river at the back of the hotel by a fly-fisher, basked under the trees in the public promenades, enjoyed the good things served up in the coffee-room of

the hotel, and received agreeable impressions from things in general, he bade adieu to this gem of a town on "the banks of a beautiful river," and set out for Vienna.

The route by rail from Ischl to Vienna, after getting clear of the seductive beauties of the Traunsee at Gmunden, does not command or excite great admiration, at any rate it did not excite the Hermit; so he indulged his inclination for the fragrant weed, smoked a good cigar, and enjoyed quiet, dreamy reflections, as he journeyed onwards towards the capital of Austria.

On arriving at Vienna late in the evening, he drove to the "Imperial Hotel," and soon found he had no reason to regret his choice, the accommodation being very good. Next morning he turned out according to his custom for a stroll after breakfast, and soon found much to admire. The *tout ensemble* of this part of Vienna, which may briefly be called the modern part, is rather staggering to a stranger who has been accustomed to consider Austria and its government to be short of money, with its National ledgers showing, for years past, balances on the wrong side; and after some two or three hours' walking about, and long rides in tramcars, the Hermit began to think that at last he had found a country in which it seemed that the people, or those who governed the people, got on better without money, or with a short supply of it, than simple and old-fashioned governments and people get on with it.

Anyhow, the vastness and the grandeur of this part of Vienna deeply impressed the Hermit with an idea of the almost boundless power of modern financiers; for it was quite clear to him that without a system of "wheels within wheels," and financial main-springs, such effects as he saw could not be produced. Paris is a sumptuous city, but it is poor in some of its modern features compared with Vienna.

As for popular resorts, gardens, concerts, &c., &c., their

name is legion, and their character high-class. The shops will bear comparison with those of any other European city, except Paris or London; and in the fine arts it can hold its own. The dwelling-houses are palatial in character, and in their interior decorations they are models of elegance and sumptuous luxury.

Places of amusement abound to such an extent, that one might imagine amusement and luxurious enjoyment to be the chief aim of the population; and the character of the best of such institutions is equal to any in Europe. The Imperial Opera House, which is second to no other, and the new Academy of Art, both demand special mention; but to attempt to describe either in these pages would be vanity and vexation of spirit, so instead of description the advice is given—to go and see them.

And then, if you wish to see one of the best existing types of an old-world city, go to Prague in the footsteps of the Hermit, and patronise the “Hotel Zum Schwarzen Ross.” You may then luxuriate in imaginary scenes of social life and manners in the olden time, and conjure up, with some approach to truth, such as no mere reading of history can inspire, visions of the past, and link them vividly with the present.

Standing, for instance, on the grand old Carlsbrück Bridge, more remarkable for its strength than its beauty, erected in the fourteenth century, you will see a strangely curious tower of defence at each end, one of the two being adorned with the armorial bearings of lands once subject to the Crown of Bohemia. This tower resisted in 1648 a siege which the Swedes maintained against the City for fourteen weeks without success, and when the Prussians were expelled from Prague in 1744, the bridge was the scene of fierce conflict and terrible slaughter. The buttresses are crowned with statues of Saints, and on one is a curious representation of souls in purgatory, said

to be commemorative of the expulsion of French invaders and the cessation of the plague.

As a whole, the impression created on the mind by a visit to Prague will be, that it is one of those places least affected by modern notions and the fast life of the present age—slow, heavy, and behind the time. All the more attractive, therefore, to the relic-monger and the seeker after primitive types.

Having ruminated and cogitated about the highways and byeways, the Market Place, the bridges, and on the river of ancient Prague, the Hermit left it for the fair city of Dresden, and had the advantage of passing through the Saxon Switzerland on a fine bright day, which enhanced greatly the enjoyment of the remarkably picturesque scenery of the route, the railway being in the Valley and in close proximity to the River Elbe, with its peculiar long boats or barges, its rafts of timber, and its busy commerce, the whole making an uncommonly pretty picture, combining the practical with the lovely and the sentimental.

The grand old rocks along the stream being worked into by quarry men, and disembowelled and sent away piecemeal in the shape of squared stones for building purposes—goodness knows where their destination may be—to meet demands for which these quarries have existed, who can tell how long! And so with the trees growing on these slopes; they are constantly being cut down by the woodman's axe, and sent into the stream to be floated away to distant markets; the difference between the rocks and the trees being, that when the rocks are taken away, no more rocks will rise in their place; but when the trees are cut down and used up others will grow, if planted; and thus it is that "Changes come o'er the face of Nature."

Now for Dresden, the fair and the charming. The Hermit took up his abode at the "Hotel Belle Vue," and

was fortunate in being allocated to a bedroom commanding a view of the Elbe and that portion of the city lying on the opposite bank of the river, and at once conceived the idea that it was a place for a prolonged stay, or a second visit, or both.

Further acquaintance with Dresden confirmed these notions. A more charming city it is difficult to imagine. Sumptuous buildings, open spaces, grand features, a princely home of the fine arts, a noble river running through it, choice gardens in its midst, native musical talent of the highest order, public wants anticipated in every way, and wisely provided for; nothing seems to be left undone which could add to the sum of human happiness, so far as it can be secured by good government and external appliances, such as railways, steamboats, &c., &c.

And about this fair city the Hermit wandered and greatly enjoyed the brief period which he could devote to it, his favorite walk being on and over the magnificent old bridge which the French general, Davoust, tried in vain to blow up. The bridge fortunately was so strong, and the stupid general so weak, that no traces can be found of the spot where his puny efforts were applied; the Hermit looked in vain for evidence of the trial having been made, and could only find it in history!

The next point of attraction for the traveller was Berlin, the great centre of modern Germany, the capital of the newly-consolidated Empire, which is the pride of the German heart; ruled over by an Emperor of whom all true Germans are justly proud.

But, alas, if the truth must be told, it is an empire resembling a troubled ocean; cross seas and heaving billows are keeping the experienced Statesman now at the helm in a state of constant and uneasy watchfulness.

Germany has found that a successful war, although crowned with glory, is cruelly costly and burdensome,

notwithstanding the payment by the conquered of an enormous indemnity to the conquerors ; and it looks like cruel irony, that those who paid the almost crushing sum are better off now than those who received it.

The result so far has been to create wide-spread discontent in the German mind, and strong appeals to head-quarters for remedial measures. The manufacturing class have demanded protection to native industry and obtained it ; the ear of Prince Bismarck was opened to the cry, and such measures were passed as effectually to prevent the importation of any commodities which native talent can produce, and the economic result, as a matter of course, has been, to oblige every German to pay much more for such things than they could otherwise have been bought for ; and thus the few are for the moment benefited at the expense of the many.

But this benefit to the few is limited and doubtful, while the loss to the many is certain and grievous ; and this may be illustrated by a reference to one German factory, capable of, and at one time really turning out about 600 engines yearly, but since the establishment of *protection* only turning out about 60 ; everything being dearer, the manufacturers can no longer compete with the outer world to which cheaper markets are open.

In this way *protection* works and always will work ; and those who pursue the phantom will in all ages find that the road to affluence in commerce is not by the way of making things as dear as possible.

Pursuing his way, the Hermit passing from Dresden to Berlin, went through a tract of country which impressed him with the notion that the agricultural industry of Germany must be a comparatively poor one ; very light land, extensive tracts being sandy and sterile to a great extent, and elsewhere not rich and fertile ; not at all a promising prospect for an overtaxed country, but tending

to excite a feeling of pity for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to say nothing about the tax-payer; and inducing reflection about the future power of the country to maintain its colossal army, which those in high places deem essential to the safety of the empire; the fear of French retaliation being always present, troubling their dreams and disturbing their repose.

The Hermit strolled and mused in the favorite promenade of the Berliners, under the "Linden trees," smoking his cigar in peace, and wondered what the end of all this martial, watch-dog kind of work will be, and how long it may go on, before common sense return to the German, French, Austrian, and Italian governments, and lead to such a common understanding and mutual good-will, that the destructive drain, occasioned by huge standing armies, may be put an end to, and the natural forces of each nation be applied to the profitable development of the inherent advantages possessed by each.

At present, no symptoms of such a change in the state of affairs have appeared; on the contrary, the almost perpetual crack of the military rifle is heard on all sides in these countries, proceeding from squads of men learning to handle the weapon with which men of neighbouring nations may be forcibly translated by tens of thousands from this world to another.

This being the state of affairs, the Hermit would say to the principal public men of each nation,—gentlemen, if you will not take good advice, and go on the square, you must follow your own devices; but if you will persist in going on in the way which leads to a bottomless pit, the time will come, and may not be far distant, when old England will be the only country in Europe worth living in.

As for Greeks and Turks, the Hermit fancies it would puzzle a Dutchman to tell, which is the better of the two,

whether either or neither ; and yet there has been an idea among the great Powers in conference, of taking a province or two from Turkey and giving them to Greece, provided only, the Sultan would agree to this adjustment, which he will not ; and so, instead of paying her debts, and putting down brigandage within her own borders, Greece is preparing for war with Turkey ; and although Turkey has borrowed all the money she can get, and has no idea of paying her foreign creditors, the probability is, that she is quite prepared to fight the Greeks, and “ lick the lot, says Moses.”

And now to return to the subject ; the Hermit's visit to Berlin was an agreeable one, and his temporary home at the “Hotel de Russie” comfortable ; during his short stay, he wandered about its good streets, and went by train to Potsdam and back, having seen the Palace of Sanssouci and its extensive gardens and grounds ; in this Palace Voltaire spent some time as the private tutor, or something of the sort, to Frederick the Great, who lived there after he had built it. The building of this Palace need not have taken long to complete, for it is simply a row of rooms on the ground floor—except at one end, where some bedrooms were built over them ; the situation is most charming, commanding fine and extensive views, and is just such a place as would suit many an English country squire.

Having thus seen Potsdam, and its modest Palace and lovely grounds, the Hermit returned to Berlin, and next day went on his way homeward ; stopping at Dusseldorf for a night's rest, and resuming his journey next morning, reached Flushing, in the Netherlands, in the evening. After a good dinner on board the steamboat, he started at night for Queenborough, getting a good night's rest in his cabin, and landing safe and well at six o'clock next morning ; he reached Victoria Station again at 9.10 a.m.,

after a month's absence. In the afternoon he took train for Great Yarmouth, in Norfolk; where he was warmly welcomed, and at the "Royal Hotel" enjoyed a good honest English dinner at the regular table d'hôte of the house; this dinner, as he remarked at the time to his friends who were dining with him, was superior in quality to anything of the kind he had met with on the Continent, and it is only fair to "mine host" to proclaim the pleasing truth.

At Yarmouth he found considerable progress had been made in the erection of a new Town Hall; and in compliment to the town and the talented architect, Mr. J. B. Pearce, of Norwich, he gives a lithographic view of this specimen of English architecture, which he fancies will not be over-shadowed by that which he also gives of the old and much admired structure—the Hotel de Ville, or Town Hall of Brussels.

After all his wanderings, the Hermit feels grateful for the benefits derived from change of air and scene, and the advantage gained by increased knowledge of the world and its ways; the result of all such holiday tours being to strengthen his attachment to his native land, with its old institutions and advantages, far superior as they are to those of the less favoured nations of the Continent; for, excited and troubled as we are just now in political matters, the fact remains—that English constitutional government stands out in bold relief, and grandly substantial, when compared with the working of any other governmental machinery in Europe; and so the Hermit says:—

" England, with all thy faults,
I love thee still."

21, PARLIAMENT STREET,

WESTMINSTER,

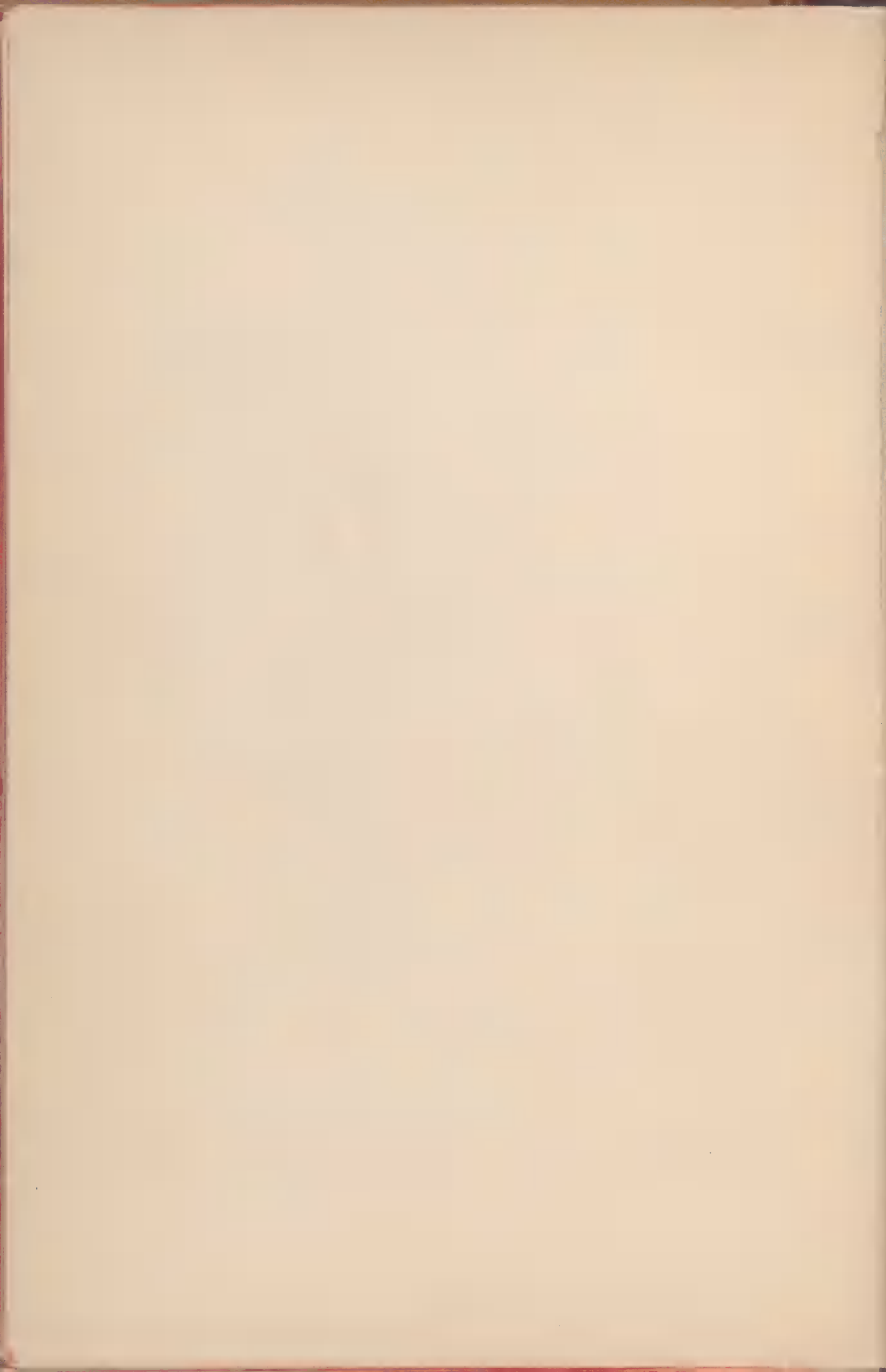
December, 1880.

MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, GREAT YARMOUTH.

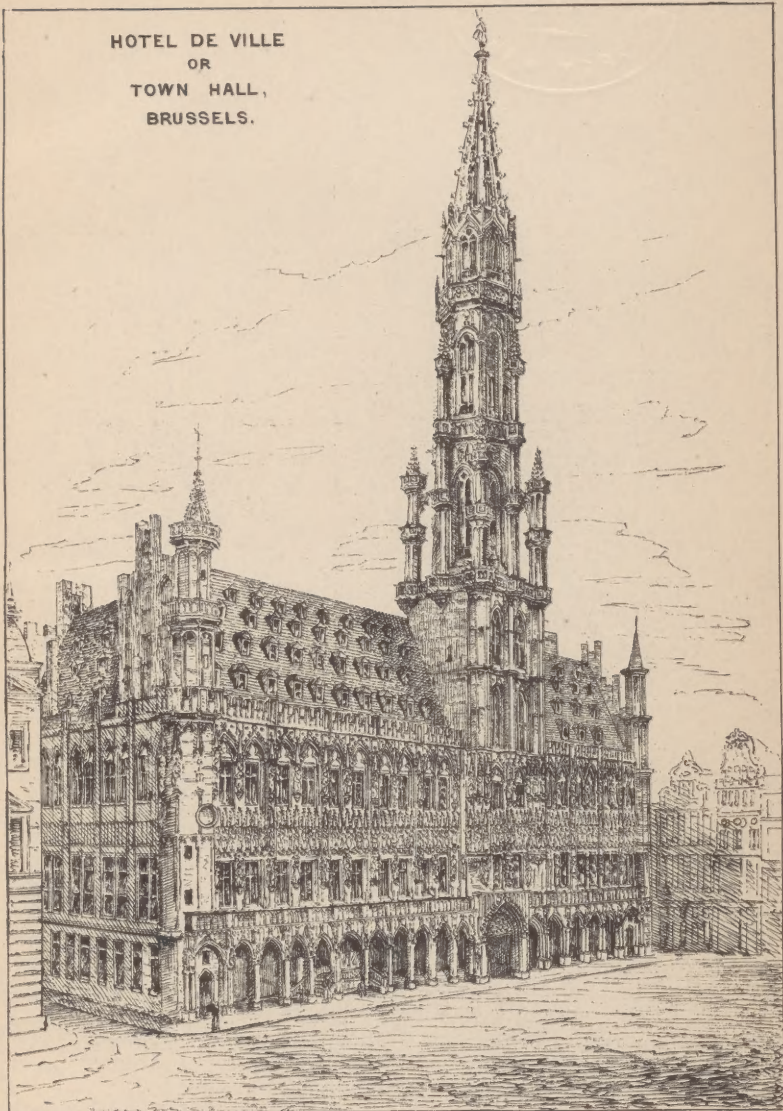
SELECTED DESIGN

JOHN B. PEARCE ARCHITECT





HOTEL DE VILLE
OR
TOWN HALL,
BRUSSELS.







THE TOWN RESIDENCE OF THE HERMIT OF WESTMINSTER.

